

International Symposium on Protein Condensation, in Honor of Gregorio Weber, May 21–25, 1997, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The past two decades have witnessed an impressive development in our understanding of protein condensation reactions, including folding, subunit interactions, and assembly of supramolecular structures. Significant advances in both experimental and theoretical tools have provided answers to some of the original questions pertaining to protein condensation, at the same time leading to even more challenging questions. A substantial portion of the work of the late Prof. Gregorio Weber has been dedicated to elucidating some of the key aspects of protein interactions. His work has inspired a number of others to follow the paths tracked by proteins in establishing the precise structures and interactions that provide them with such a broad array of functions. In recognition of Prof. Weber's contribution to this field, and in celebration of his 81st birthday, we organized the International Symposium on Protein Condensation, which was held on May 21–25, 1997, in Rio de Janeiro.

The symposium comprised lectures by active investigators in the field, as well as poster presentations by participants. The following speakers participated in the symposium: Alan Cooper, Brian D. Sykes, C. Nick Pace, Catherine A. Royer, David M. Jameson, Edward W. Voss, Jr., Enrico Gratton, Gonzalo de Prat-Gay, Gregorio Weber, Gregory D. Reinhart, Igor Polikarpov, Jack A. Kornblatt, Jerson L. Silva, Jiri Jonas, John E. Johnson, José N. Onuchic, Joseph M. Beechem, Lawrence Parkhurst, Leopoldo de Meis, Marcelo Santoro, Marcio F. Colombo, Octavio Monasterio, Paul Horowitz, Paulo M. Bisch, Peter Prevelige, Peter L. Privalov, Robert L. Baldwin, Robert M. Clegg, Robert T. Sauer, Sérgio T. Ferreira, Stephen G. Sligar, and Thomas E. Creighton. Some of the topics addressed in lectures and poster sessions included kinetics and mechanisms of protein folding, folding intermediates, protein-protein interactions, kinetics and thermodynamics, protein dynamics, protein-nucleic acid interactions, viral assembly, antibody interactions, and structural determination and analysis. The last morning was dedicated to a roundtable discussion titled "Protein Folding: Perspectives in Biophysical Chemistry and Biotechnology for the 21st Century," which discussed some of the key issues that should be emphasized in basic and applied research in this field in coming years. All sessions were videotaped, forming a library that is available to the general public through the Brazilian Open University.

The symposium included a special banquet, during which several of Weber's former students, research associates,

collaborators, and disciples paid a tribute to his remarkable achievements in the field. His humanitarian qualities as well as his cosmopolitan nature and culture were also highlighted.

Gregorio Weber has played a very important role in science in pioneering some of the frontiers of modern protein biochemistry and biophysics. However, we feel that in this regard his influence on Latin American science has been even greater. Throughout his long and productive career, he has always maintained his cultural and scientific contacts in his native Argentina as well as in other countries in South America. Many of today's leading biophysicists and biochemists in these countries have benefited, directly or indirectly, from his advice and inspiration. For his importance in biomedical science in general and in Latin America in particular, we were proud to organize such an inspiring and stimulating symposium in Brazil. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the speakers and participants who created such an exciting and warm atmosphere during the symposium, as well as the Brazilian agencies that provided financial support (Financiadora de Estudos e Projetos, Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico, Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal Docente de Ensino Superior, Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, and Banco do Brasil S.A.). We are deeply sorry that the Professor, as Weber became known to some of his disciples, passed away so soon after the symposium. However, from the symposium presentations, as well as from his words and remarks in Rio, we feel that he left us with the certainty that his work and ideas will continue to inspire those who marvel at the intricacies of protein interactions.

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